

**City of Eau Claire  
Plan Commission Minutes  
Meeting of September 6, 2016**

City Hall, Council Chambers

7:00 p.m.

Members Present: Messrs. Brenholt, Granlund, Larsen, Seymour, Pederson, Radabaugh, Weld  
Ms. Ebert and Ms. Mitchell

Staff Present: Messrs. Tufte, Ivory, Noel, Solberg

The meeting was chaired by Mr. Weld.

1. **REZONING (Z-1581-16) – P-Public to C-3P, 1260 Menomonie Street**  
**SITE PLAN (SP-1634) – YMCA Tennis Center**

Mr. Tufte presented a request to rezone property from P (Public) to C-3P and to adopt the general development plan for a proposed YMCA tennis center at 1260 Menomonie Street. The proposal is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan for commercial. An existing pole building will be torn down to make way for a new 120' by 416' (49,920 square foot) tennis center. The metal building will have varying facade materials and murals to break up the appearance. A development agreement was recently approved by the City Council that contains many other provisions along with receiving a public parking lot to the west. Tennis center parking is proposed at 48 stalls and overflow parking will be available in the city parking lot to the west. The Waterways and Parks Commission recommended more landscape screening to the north of the building, or south of the 100-foot wide buffer of city land along Half Moon Lake. Additional requirements are noted in the staff condition letter.

Ken Van Es, Executive Director of Eau Claire YMCA stated the project is a good fit for the area because the recreational function relates to Carson Park, Hobbs Ice Center and the future UWEC Event Center, and thus the area could become a recreational hub. The YMCA Board was supportive of the parking lot going back to the City and was agreeable to the approval conditions. The outdoor tennis courts will be built later after the building. There is a three year window in the development agreement. He said the logic for the public parking lot to the west, and not placement of the tennis center there, was due to poor soil conditions.

Jeremy Gragert, 451 Lincoln Avenue, showed plans for possible trail connections. As part of the project he asked for trails along Carson Park Drive and Menomonie Street that would connect existing or future trails. He advocated to complete gaps now, for wider trails and cited the City's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan for this area.

Richard Johnston, 1709 Taft Avenue, agreed with Mr. Gragert that there needs to be a connection between the existing trails and to what is planned for the future. This project would enhance safety for bicyclists and pedestrians, especially for people along Menomonie Street.

Mr. Brenholt moved to recommend approval of the rezoning and to approve the site plan with conditions of the staff report. Mr. Radabaugh seconded and motion carried.

2. **PUBLIC ZONING (PZ-1603) – Menomonie Street Overflow Parking lot**

Mr. Tufte presented a request to allow for a new parking lot west of the new YMCA tennis center. The 175-stall lot will be donated to the City by the YMCA. There is a pedestrian connection to meet the future trail along Half Moon Lake. Approval is recommended per the conditions of the staff report along with the modified curb cut access.

Jeremy Gragert, 451 Lincoln Avenue, asked for a trail connection from the sidewalk along Menomonie Street, through the parking lot, and to the lake for safety and accessibility.

Mr. Seymour moved to recommend approval of the public rezoning with conditions of the staff report. Mr. Granlund seconded. Ms. Mitchell then moved to amend the site plan to add a sidewalk connection from Menomonie Street to the parking lot. Mr. Pederson seconded and the amended motion carried.

3. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CZ-1616) – Signage, 2215 E. Clairemont Avenue**  
**SITE PLAN (SP-1635) – Sign Plan**

Mr. Ivory presented a request to allow for additional wall signs in a C-1A district and a sign plan for a multiple tenant office building at 2215 E. Clairemont Avenue to install two wall signs on the east side of the building. Each sign would be 3'6" by 5'6" or 19 square feet facing Fairfax Street for the two office tenants. There is an existing ground sign along Clairemont Avenue. The two signs would be aluminum panel signs and non-lighted. The north wall nameplate sign must be removed due to two entrance nameplates already being located on the building.

No one spoke for or against the project.

Mr. Pederson moved to approve the conditional use permit and the site plan sign plan with the conditions of the staff report plus the removal of the name plate sign on the east wall. Ms. Ebert seconded and motion carried.

4. **CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT (CZ-1617) – Second Electronic Message Center, 2402 Lorch Avenue**  
**SITE PLAN (SP-1639) – Ground sign, Sign Plan**

Mr. Ivory presented a conditional use permit request to allow for a second electronic message center (EMC) sign and a sign plan for a ground sign for a multiple building entertainment/hotel complex at 2402 Lorch Avenue. Code allows a second EMC on the same parcel upon approval of a conditional use permit. The City previously issued a permit for a 44 square foot EMC sign, to be located on an existing pole sign along I-94. A second EMC would be located on the east side entrance of a new building addition. The size would be 31 square feet. The EMCs would be about 500 feet apart and a building is in between. The sign plan relates to a new ground sign along Lorch Avenue. It would be about 48 square feet in size and 10 feet in height. Its placement serves the overall complex that includes Action City, the Metropolis Hotel and the Chaos Water Park.

Applicant, Matt Snyder with SignArt Co., Inc. stated the location of the second EMC is only going to be visible from the south parking lot and not from the I-94 sign. The sign is for welcome messaging, drawing people to the right entrance.

Ms. Mitchell moved to approve the conditional use permit and the site plan with the conditions of the staff report. Mr. Brenholt seconded and motion carried.

5. **SITE PLAN (SP-1638) – Sign Plan, Oxbow Hotel**

Mr. Ivory presented a request to approve a sign plan for the Oxbow Hotel at 508 and 516 Galloway Street. The two parcels/buildings are allowed eight signs because of their dual street frontages, and locations of the wall signs can be shifted upon approval of the Plan Commission as part of a sign plan. The Plan proposes one ground sign and up to eight wall signs. The monument sign shall not to exceed 40 sq. ft. and 8' in height. Three projecting signs are proposed as part of the sign plan but will be installed at a later date on the main building and would require a conditional use permit. Mr. Ivory added that window signs are not reviewed as part of a sign plan. The overall sign plan is in compliance with the sign code.

Applicant, Nick Meyer with Longform, LLC spoke in favor and stated the west facing wall sign will be illuminated with reflective illumination. The monument sign will be installed later and would be lighted as well.

Mr. Larsen moved to approve the sign plan with the conditions of the staff report. Mr. Radabaugh seconded and motion carried.

6. **DISCUSSION/DIRECTION**

A. **Student Housing/Randall Park**

Mr. Tufte stated staff received UWEC enrollment, campus housing and parking numbers. Neighborhood maps of current and future land use, zoning, past new construction (since 1999) and floodplain information was covered. To balance student housing and stabilize the Historic Randall Park neighborhood the current plan calls for R-M zoning at allowed densities along the edges and to focus home ownership inside the core. The floodplain causes challenges when trying to redevelop and so R-M zoning helps facilitate it; however, he noted perhaps the City could explore a code amendment to attract more owner-occupied attached and detached dwelling units within R-M zoning. This could be based on a floor-area ratio, zoning conservancy overlay provision, or less allowed bedrooms per dwelling unit via a conditional use permit. Yet, assembling sites will remain a challenge and incentives like tax increment financing or other tools could be investigated.

Ms. Ebert asked about several areas in the neighborhood for possible down-zoning. Mr. Tufte stated any down-zonings will have to be initiated by the Commission. Ms. Ebert also noted redevelopment challenges such as inadequate neighborhood marketing and builders' lack of deep pockets, obtaining lending for four units plus and receiving floodplain approvals.

Ms. Mitchell asked how much student housing is needed in the future for the neighborhood; questioning also after UWEC builds their desired amount of campus housing what will that do to previous student housing.

Mr. Ivory stated the neighborhood parking situation with Mayo Clinic Health System is still being worked on with stakeholders. It will improve with police license plate recognition capabilities.

Commissioners expressed concern over development along First Avenue and that it should have more owner-occupied units since it is next to Owen Park. Mr. Weld pointed out it could help set a favorable precedent into the neighborhood. They also were interested in exploring possible zoning changes related to the bedroom counts in R-M dwelling units.

B. Code Compliance Items

None.

C. Future Agenda Items

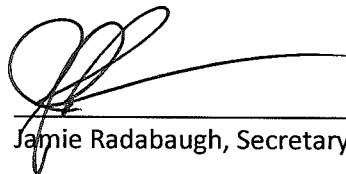
None.

D. Additions or Corrections to Minutes

None.

7. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of August 15, 2016 were approved.

  
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Jamie Radabaugh, Secretary